

D R A F T

8 Dec 58

Ltr fr Gen Schriever to Mr Root

This responds to your letter of _____ (date) _____, concerning photographic reconnaissance proposals.

As you are aware we made a fairly extensive study of the general requirement for an early satellite reconnaissance capability and of the technical possibility of meeting the necessary users requirements, and that as a result the Thor reconnaissance program was cancelled.

We similarly have been approached recently by individuals, possibly from the same sources, who have advanced ideas similar to the ones you mentioned in your letter. As a result we have caused a quick re-assessment of the situation to be made by a very highly qualified ad hoc committee headed by Dr. Edwin Land. Because of both technological and political security problems, this study has been made without very much fanfare. However, its results were such as to convince us that it is not really possible to construct camera

NRO review(s) completed.

equipment of worthwhile resolving power, within required weight and space limitations, which will produce results of significant value in the time period we both have in mind.

We have, therefore, discouraged the specific proposals that have come our way and request that you do the same. An added reason for this kind of action (which, of course, we cannot use when talking to those making such proposals) is that the complication of a reconnaissance mission added to the already sensitive nature of some of the Thor-boosted shots could cause unsolvable complications.

We would, of course, be interested in hearing from you on an informal basis as to your evaluation of the feasibility of any such proposals if they seem applicable in the years to come.